

**The miners, the just wage and the mining company :
Perspectives of an Ubuntu response to the Marikana killings**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

PHILOSOPHY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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FEBRUARY 2019

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Literature and Doctor of Philosophy at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. It has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other University.

Julieka Bayat

Submitted on this _____ day of _____ 2019 in _____

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Rock Drill Operators who were killed on 16 August 2012, in their quest for a just wage, at Marikana in the North West Province in South Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu

(‘I am, because we are, since we are, therefore I am’)

I hereby thank my supervisor, Professor MB Ramose, for his profound guidance and invaluable counsel during the time spent on this thesis. I would like to acknowledge my deceased parents, Dawood Mohamed Cassimjee and Ayesha (Vawda) Cassimjee who instilled in me that education is the weapon against domination and oppression and that education can uplift one from poverty and despair. This philosophy has been my driving force, even at this stage of my life. For instilling these values in me, I am very grateful. To, my husband, Ismail, I appreciate the environment that he provided that facilitated my growth as a person and enabled me to be the person that I have grown to be. To Nadira, Fiona, Aidan, Fred and my grandchildren Yasmina, Aisha and Adam, thank you for keeping me centred and providing me with the love that only my dearest family can provide. Finally to Albert and Madhurie, a big thank you for your invaluable presence through the years and for constantly encouraging me, when my energy flagged.

ABSTRACT

The miners, the just wage and the mining company : perspectives of an *Ubuntu* response to the Marikana killings

This research focuses upon the killing on 16 August 2012, by the South African Police Service, of miners working in Marikana, in the North West Province, in their struggle for a just wage. This experience highlighted the ethical question of the relationship between the employee and the employer. This research investigates this question by reference to the evolution of the doctrine of the “just wage” and the “just price” in Western moral philosophy. The investigation shows that this Western doctrine is a significant basis for an ethical evaluation of the relationship between employee and the employer.

However, the doctrine does require expansion by taking the woman as an indispensable factor in labour relations. Also, it requires deepening by engaging in dialogue with other philosophies of the world, in this particular case, the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. The dialogue with *Ubuntu* is justified by the fact that the majority of the miners, the actual diggers of the mineral wealth, are born into and nurtured through the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, even if some may have reservations about it. The dialogue reveals a specific philosophical issue, namely, a clash of the epistemological and moral paradigms. The *Ubuntu* epistemological-ethical maxim of *feta kgomo o tshware motho* (if and when one must choose between the continual accumulation of wealth and the preservation of human life then one ought to opt for the latter) is fundamentally at odds with capitalism, an economic system that elevates wealth and money to the status of a deity. A resolution of this conflict is an ethical imperative.

Key words:

Marikana, Rock Drill Operators (RDOs), miners, *Ubuntu*, the “just wage”, the “just price”, trade unionism.

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